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As the journal of the Alliance for Community Media, Community Media Review shall support the Alliance mission by providing: a comprehensive overview of past, present and future issues critical to the Alliance and its membership; vigorous and thoughtful debate on those issues; and a venue for members and like-minded groups to present issues critical to the Alliance.

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Educational Access Unique and Invaluable

by **Bunnie Riedel**

Executive Director

Alliance for Community Media

Neither my mother or my father had a high school diploma. Both spent their lives in back-breaking toil, farming other people's land or picking other people's crops, as farm laborers. They barely scrapped by in a hand-to-mouth existence and by the time I came along, it was necessary to put me up for adoption because they already had too many mouths to feed and too little money.

I grew up knowing this history and while the household I was adopted into did little to encourage education beyond high school (especially for girls), I understood early on that my entire future hinged on getting a good education. For that reason, when my adopted mother threatened to not let me to go to college (even though I had grants and scholarships) I packed a bag and left home at 17. I was determined that nothing would stop me from getting a college degree and nothing did.

That 17-year-old girl's conviction has served me well these many years later. More than just granting me a diploma, college taught me that there was a big world out there full of ideas and ripe for exploration. It also taught me that learning is a lifelong process; the more I learned, the more I wanted to learn and the more I found out how little I really knew.

These days it is nearly impossible to earn any kind of a living without some formal education beyond high school. Surveys show the earning gap between those with a high school education and those with a college education is almost \$18,000 per year. When I entered college only 14 percent of all high school graduates even attended college and only half of them completed a four-year degree.

In addition to increasing income potential, education creates better citizens. Incidence of criminal behavior, and voter and volunteer involvement, are directly affected positively or negatively by level of education. That's not to say that those with little to no education will commit crime, never vote or volunteer—but it does suggest that education impacts on quality of life and participation.

The possibilities for the future of educational access are boundless. With the new technological capabilities of video interaction and media convergence, the delivery and sharing of real knowledge will exceed our current expectations and our wildest imagination.



Then there's the sheer enjoyment found in lifelong learning. I spent several years teaching a three-hour-per-day class to elderly disabled adults. The program was designed by the school district to increase the quality of life for those elderly adults, it was not intended to certify or award diplomas. We teachers rotated through 11 convalescent care facilities, starting in September and ending in July. We were able to document marked improvement in alertness, interaction and psychological state (and sometimes even physical condition), showing that mental stimulation through education enhanced our students' welfare and their participation in their care. For me, it was particularly gratifying when one of my students would happen on something they had never learned before and become engaged in the subject. It proved to me that no one ever becomes "too old" to learn.

Educational access embraces all of these concepts. It can increase earning potential, create better citizens and offer lifelong learning opportunities.

When I see that educational access is offering "Cobol" or "Accounting 101" or "Beginning Spanish," I think how those, and other for-credit distance learning courses like them, may help someone gain a better job. Or maybe educational access brings the school board meetings to a family's living room and increases their level of participation at the voting booth or the next PTA meeting. Or perhaps educational access teaches someone how to better manage their money, or takes them on a tour of the city's museum giving them background on the artists and adding to the quality of that viewer's life.

And it's not just the receipt of useful

educational information, but participation in media is itself educational. Some of my most favorite moments in the Alliance have been talking to kids in media classes. At one high school, I asked a student what he had learned in his communications class and he told me, "I've learned not to believe everything I see on TV because now I know how a lot of it gets created." At a recent Alliance regional conference, a teacher presented a workshop about the more than 100 elementary students she works with to produce the school's *Morning Show*. Throughout her presentation she emphasized the self-esteem the children gained as they learned television production.

The possibilities for the future of educational access are boundless. With the new capabilities of video interaction and media convergence, the delivery and sharing of real knowledge will exceed our current expectations and our wildest imagination.

As one of the three pillars of community media, educational access is unique and invaluable. It doesn't get nearly the attention of public access and it isn't the politician's favorite media platform. And, as so often happens in education, educational media access is extraordinarily vulnerable to the budget axe when the winds of fortune shift or the tax-base drops.

I hold education as one of my highest priorities and I know personally that sometimes just getting an education can be quite a struggle. Educational access takes one of our nation's greatest democratic values—that educational opportunity should be open to all—and it delivers that promise directly to America's classrooms and living rooms. My hat is off to all those who work in educational access, you are truly heroes and visionaries.

Local Educational Access Meets Local Needs

by Rob Brading

Alliance Chairman and Executive
Director of Multnomah Community TV

One of the hallmarks of growing up is a certain amount of rebellion. It's a phase most of us go through and one that seems to be necessary if we are going to mature and lead independent lives. But it always amazes me that rebellious kids in Seattle and in Miami express their rebellion by wearing pants that are six sizes too big for them. I shouldn't be surprised. Our media have not only made it possible but almost assured that rebellion will look the same whether it's Portland, Maine or Portland, Oregon. Of course, it's not just the media. Airplane travel, telecommunications, the Internet and the World Wide Web all contribute.

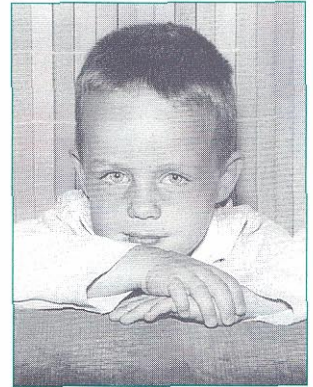
So even rebellion is homogenized.

Our schools are challenged by the same forces. Most of us applaud the idea of local control over our schools, but the forces moving us towards homogeneity, while sometimes subtle, are almost always powerful. Textbooks in most of the country are chosen not by your local school board or even state bodies but by state-wide boards in California and Texas. Textbook publishing has small profit margins and publishers make enough money only with high volume sales. High volume sales require acceptance by the two largest text book buyers, namely the schools in California and Texas. Without the approval to sell in those two states, a text book will lose money.

That kind of enforced homogeneity has led not only to blandness but to omitting unpleasant truths and avoiding controversy. Advocacy groups of every political and philosophical stripe police California- and Texas-approved text books to make sure they don't step out of that particular group's vision of political correctness.

The market isn't the only force pushing us towards homogeneity. Here in Oregon, due to voter-passed initiatives, local authority and autonomy have been rapidly eroded. No where is this more

Local education channels are actually controlled by people at the local level. Programming is produced to meet local needs, not because it fits some larger demographic profile or has been cleansed of all controversy to avoid offending anyone or everyone.



true than in our schools, where each session the legislature acts more and more like an absentee 90-member school board for the entire state, little recognizing that Portland's urban school system and the isolated, tiny school districts in Oregon's eastern desert have more differences than commonalities.

Anyway you slice it, local communities have less and less control of their schools. Demands for statewide and nationwide testing will determine curriculum just as surely as California and Texas now determine which text books get published and which don't.

Even technology, which some promise will liberate individuality, create more homogeneity. Technology will soon make it possible for every (wired) student to see and hear the lectures of great English teachers, great mathematicians, great scientists. A whole new world of education will be available where our children can, in effect, attend an Ivy League school. Sounds cool, huh?

The first problem is no matter how brilliant the professor, we will be listening to a single point of view. Even the brightest are often wrong and even if they're right, there are no right ways to interpret Shakespeare or to write a poem or even to solve a math problem. (Yes, there are usually right answers to math problems, although I usually had a hard time finding them.)

The second problem is the assumption that every student will benefit more from sitting in the best professor's class when, in fact, we all learn differently, need different kinds of attention and

respond differently. No one instructor is going to be best for every student.

As a nation, we will flounder and perhaps drown in this flooding sea of sameness. To plagiarize from former Alliance Chair Tony Riddle, a homogenized educational system is like planting only one type of corn. The United States has always benefited from not just allowing but fostering many points of view. It's a truth our founders recognized and imbedded in the First Amendment.

Those in the community media movement have always recognized that one of the strengths and virtues of community media is our focus on the local. People in the Northwest like to think of themselves as being different from folks in other parts of the country. Portlanders and Seattlites think of themselves as different from each other. And the residents of the communities of the Portland East Metro area served by MCTV think of themselves as distinctly different from Portland.

Those distinctions, those perceptions of differences, don't set the Northwest or Portland or MCTV's home communities apart from other places in the country. People who live in Brooklyn see themselves as far removed from Manhattan and people in neighborhoods everywhere see similar differences. We know that we live in a local community.

It's ironic that one of the technologies that has done the most to drive us towards homogeneity is also one of the few countervailing forces against tide of educational uniformity. Local education

see EDUCATIONAL ACCESS - page 13

This issue of Community Media Review takes a look at how the use of electronic media is helping to educate students at all levels. In today's society, where the knowledge of information and the ability to communicate are paramount, education access channels, schools and colleges, and interactive television networks are changing the way we learn, and help to ensure that lifelong learning takes place.

We begin with **Lucy Griggs**, in Tampa, Florida, who describes the work of the Tampa Educational Cable Consortium and some of the unique programs that involve and educate many community members.

Liz Rhodes, in Sacramento, California, talks about the efforts of the Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium. Programming for teachers, students, and the general public make education access there a valuable resource.

The federal government recognizes the importance of education access as well. **Terri Ferinde Dunham** of the U.S. Department of Education describes how their *Satellite Town Meetings*, teleconferences, and the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education team with access to help bring local communities together to improve education.

Joe Krause, from Salina, Kansas, tells of the telecourses being taught there, and also brings out the importance of having adequate human support for video learners.

Philip Cook in New Providence, New Jersey, describes teaching television production to high school students, the tensions it can sometimes produce, and the community benefits that can be derived.

Rod Swartz, in the Princeton City Schools in Cincinnati, Ohio, chronicles the growth of their unique operation, and relates how he believes the use of video technology will revolutionize education. In a sidebar, he explains how public access centers can help educational institutions understand and utilize new technologies for education.

Brett Saunders in Lake Orion, Michigan, also a television production teacher at the high school level, goes in depth about his philosophy of teaching and shows that television production is a valuable method for teaching students to communicate effectively in the modern world.

In Sublette, Kansas, **Carol Swinney** describes how 14 school districts and several colleges in a 10,000-square-mile rural area depend on their interactive television network to provide a full range of courses and give students of all ages there quality educational experiences.

In Howard County, Maryland, **Cheryl Magill** describes how, in going from a one-camera operation to full-blown production capabilities, education access can be much more than just telecourses.

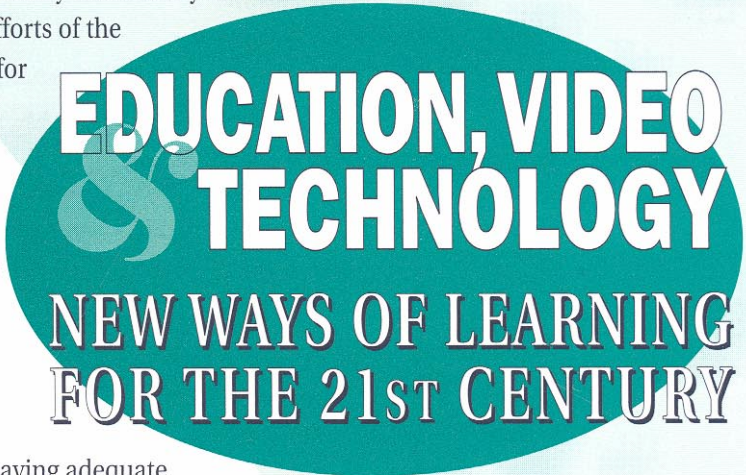
Pat Garlinghouse, in Houston, Texas, has been involved in collaborations between public access and schools for many years. She describes several programs for students at different levels, and proves that educational television does not have to be classroom-oriented.

Joyce Pitt, in Enid, Oklahoma, relates how education access helped the local school system fulfill an unfunded mandate to teach foreign language at the elementary level. This program has benefited multiple school districts in two states.

Finally, **Mike Reisz** runs WDPS-FM, a noncommercial radio station in the Dayton, Ohio Public Schools. He describes how radio has been an effective tool for teaching communications skills, but also presents unique challenges to overcome.

— *David Hawksworth, Guest Editor-In-Chief*

David Hawksworth is executive director at Community Access Television of Salina, Inc. in Salina, Kansas. Previously, he taught television production at the high school level, and was station manager at TV-36/Communities on Cable, Inc. in Summit, NJ. He has been involved in community media for 10 years. He may be reached at 785.823.2500, or by email at DaveH@salnet.org.



EDUCATION, VIDEO & TECHNOLOGY

NEW WAYS OF LEARNING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

TV That's Good for Your Mind

by Lucy Griggs

Tampa Educational Cable Consortium is a non-profit organization that oversees the programming and operations of the local educational access channels on the cable systems serving Hillsborough County, Florida. The Consortium is a cooperative of 17 of the major educational and cultural institutions in the county, including public and private universities, a community college, school district, museums, and educational attractions like the aquarium and zoo. A representative from each institution sits on the Consortium's Board of Directors and actively participates in the direction of the organization and the programming on the channels.

The Consortium presently programs two 24-hour channels with non-commercial educational programs. *The Education Channel* is available throughout Hillsborough County to 240,000 cable subscribers on Time Warner Communications Channel 18, while *The Explorer Channel* is seen only in the City of Tampa on Time Warner Channel 21.

The Consortium distributes members' programming via the cable systems to extend the reach of the organizations' initiatives. Staff works with members to acquire pre-produced programs that enhance the channel lineup and mirror members' initiatives, and to produce original programs of interest to the local educational community and to the general public.

In order to satisfy the needs of the Consortium's institutional partners, to serve the community at large, and to manage keep the staff sane, the board sets a production calendar a year in advance that establishes the main series that staff will work on throughout the year. The 1998-99 production calendar includes 10 regular series: *Art: Off the Wall*, *Community Forum*, school board meetings, three *Homework Hotlines*, *Lecture Series*, *Summer Reading Club*, *Book Talks* and *NewsBeats*. Any member

institution can participate in *Community Forum* or *NewsBeats* by simply scheduling an appearance. *Community Forum* airs weekly and discusses issues of importance to education and to the general community. *NewsBeats* are short promotional messages that play during program breaks. These two services allow any Consortium member to promote their activities and discuss their programs and issues in depth. The other series involve specific members or collaborations between members.

Collaborative programs are a natural for a cooperative board and our most successful series have con-

tinued to develop new partners. The *Homework Hotline* project began as a middle school program designed with the school district and has grown to involve middle and high school, community college and university participation. The Wednesday night series now involves three hours of tutoring live on camera, four hours of telephone tutoring, 10 teachers and a remote feed from the University of South Florida for the final hour of college level algebra. The series is supported by local foundations, the educational partners and viewers.

The *Summer Reading Club* marries reading and television with a reading incentive project that rewards children for spending time reading during summer vacation. The accompanying series offers storytelling, special guests and other books and activities focused around a special theme. Last year's series was produced in cooperation with the library and school district, but involved seven other Consortium

members as well as local businesses, artists and community members. The *Summer Reading Club* is recipient of the International Reading Association's Broadcast Media Award for Children's Television, the Hometown Video Award for Children's Programs, and the bronze Telly.

The board has made major strides toward involving more members of the community in programming and on the channels over the past two years. Board and community members serve on committees that help to design and develop programming on *The Education Channel* and *The Explorer Channel*. Programs currently in development include a series for teens and a science show. Focus groups and a biannual survey of viewers give the audience perspective on proposed programming, ensuring the Consortium's resources are devoted to projects that the community wants.

Our small but active marketing department makes sure that the educational access channels are active in the community as well. We participate in the annual Good Community Fair, Kids' Fest, and events at member organizations. We cosponsor the annual Family Reading Festival and honor dedicated members of the community with the Community Communications Awards each fall. We were also proud to be a sponsor of the Alliance's Southeast Region Conference held in Tampa in May.

The Consortium receives grants from the city and county franchise fees that fund operations and a portion of the original productions. Grants, business sponsorships and individual contributions help to fully fund production and some program acquisition. Member institutions help to fund specific pro-

Tampa Educational Cable Consortium

The Tampa Educational Cable Consortium was built on a dream held by a handful of educators and, in the last 10 years, that dream has become so much more than they ever imagined.

grams and an annual telethon solicits individual memberships. Our monthly program guide, *Preview*, is sent out to all members and is available on the Consortium's web site, <http://innet.com/~educate>.

The *Education Channel* carries a diversity of programming — over 50 telecourses for college credit, curriculum enhancement, children's programs, art and music, foreign language, classic and foreign films, animations, native American programs, and specials produced by local students. The annual *Independents' Showcase* over the Fourth of July celebrates student, amateur and professional independent producers' works in a special weekend of incredible programming.

The *Explorer Channel* devotes a large segment of each day to NASA satellite programming and covers all space shuttle missions from launch to landing. Science programs are featured on *The Explorer Channel*, along with foreign language and cultural programs from around the country and the globe.

The Consortium commissioned a viewer survey last year that showed that over 40 percent of cable subscribers regularly tuned into the educational access channels and 87 percent thought that the channels provided an important service to the community and should be supported whether they watched or not.

The Tampa Educational Cable Consortium was built on a dream held by a handful of educators and, in the last 10 years, that dream has become so much more than they ever imagined. We are looking forward to the next 10 years where we hope our dreams will take us into a larger facility with more room for training and involvement from our community, while keeping the same goals in mind — to create television that's good for your mind.

Lucy Griggs is program director at the Tampa Educational Cable Consortium. She may be reached by email at educate@innet.com, or by telephone at 813.254.2253.

Learning for a Lifetime

by Liz Rhodes

By simply turning on Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium's channels 71 & 72, Sacramento's cable subscribers can receive credit for educational courses in the way most convenient for them—by watching television in their own home. Through these telecourses or by tuning in to their favorite program each week, Cable 71 & 72 engages the community to continue learning for a lifetime.

The Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium, or SECC, has been providing educational instruction for more than 14 years and the wide variety of subjects on the consortium's award-winning channels appeal to all age groups. Recognized nationally for program diversity, leadership in community cable service and innovative productions, SECC offers classroom inservices to best utilize educational cable, events that benefit teachers as well as the community and video production for member schools and other partners. And these resources increase yearly with SECC offering an ever-growing variety of programming and services.

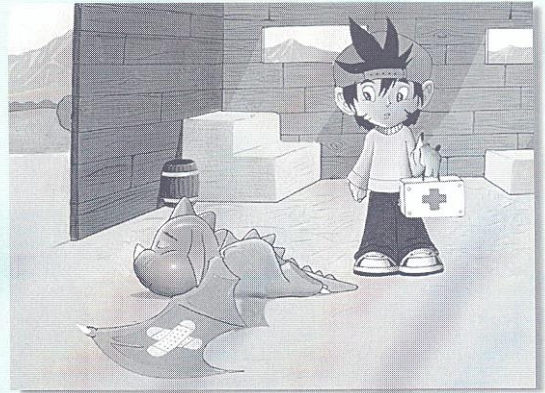
For students with busy schedules or those who want to take a class not offered at their school, Cable 71 & 72 shows credit classes year round from local high schools and colleges. But our commitment to providing the community with enriching programs doesn't end there. On Cable 71 & 72 cable subscribers can witness historic space missions as they happen on NASA TV, see unique performances in dance, theater, opera, music and film from some of the world's greatest artists on *Classic Arts Showcase* and watch foreign news broadcasts via satellite from around the globe.

Advocating the use of educational cable in the classroom is an important goal for the consortium which offers workshops and monthly materials to encourage educators to incorporate instructional television into their curriculum. SECC sponsors annual Cable in the Classroom MediaFests, events that bring teachers together with network cable representatives to learn about educational classroom programming.

As video technology becomes more accessible to students through multimedia classes, SECC connects with young people by sponsoring the annual Student Educational Video Awards. Students of all grade levels share their vision by producing videos on a variety of educational subjects. Entries are judged by students and education community members on their originality and message. The consortium recognizes the emerging talent of all SEVA participants at its annual Award Night and winning videos are shown on Cable 71 & 72.

For educators and home viewers, Cable 71 & 72 programming and SECC events and productions are listed monthly in a comprehensive viewer guide. In Sacramento, SECC encourages the community to make the most of the technology they use everyday by connecting with Cable 71 & 72 and enjoying the simple pleasure of lifelong learning.

Liz Rhodes is executive director at the Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium. She may be reached by email at secc@ns.net, or by telephone at 916.920.1006.



"Dragon," a student drawing for the SECC-produced *Imagine this Writing Contest* video by Grand Union High School art students.

Educational Access in Sacramento



Promoting Partnerships for Better Education

by Terri Ferinde Dunham

There is good news in education!

▲ A school in Illinois that pushes every student to be first in the world in mathematics achievement;

▲ A camp in Florida where kids are learning to better understand each other and build on the strengths of diversity;

▲ A newspaper in Los Angeles dedicated to assuring all children can read by age eight and publishes a special section to help;

▲ A school district in Washington state where every elementary school is working to meet the needs of its community with comprehensive school reform models;

▲ A parent in Colorado who is writing a book to help other parents better understand educational standards.

These are the kinds of examples featured each month on the *Satellite Town Meeting*, an innovative, interactive television program about good examples and ideas about education. This free, monthly television program from the U.S. Department of Education supports local school improvement efforts by providing examples of what schools, communities, businesses, teachers, parents, faith leaders, clubs, civic leaders and others around the nation are doing to make a difference.

The program's topic changes every month — past shows have focused on reading, school design, standards, teacher quality, and school safety — but partnerships are always in the spotlight. Each month it features real people with exciting approaches for making connections between schools and communities. It's hosted by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, and the phones are open for any community's questions and ideas.

The Satellite Town Meeting & Community Media

The *Satellite Town Meeting* already is broadcast on dozens of cable television stations in nearly 200 communities across the country. From Tacoma, Washington, to Miami, Florida, the *Satellite Town Meeting* is seen live and rebroadcast on school board channels, city government channels, and other public access stations.

Some community media organizations are taking the next step. For example, in Arlington, Virginia (Channel 33), the program is broadcast live in English and rebroadcast in Spanish. In Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the Forsyth County Schools (Channel 2) broadcasts the program live and follows-up with their own locally-produced *Conversation in Education* featuring



A recent *Satellite Town Meeting*, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.

U.S. Department of Education

local experts and answering live phone calls. Communications Director Doug Hinson described it as "a lively dialogue — including panelists, audience members and phone callers — ensued. That surely is what democracy is all about." The Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Television (MCET), which regularly broadcasts the *Satellite Town Meeting*, plans to produce its own state-focused version of the program this fall. More than another free program, the *Satellite Town Meeting* is an opportunity for commu-

nity media. The informal, yet professionally produced, program invites replication.

The 'hot' topics in education are issues of concern both in local communities and the nation. And, the program is in the public

domain — use, duplication and distribution are free and encouraged. For a free VHS copy of the *Town Meeting* to preview, send an email to satellite_town_meeting@ed.gov with your name and address.

Education Teleconferences

Increasingly, government agencies and others are working with the power of community media to spread the word on education to parents and families. Recent teleconferences produced by the U.S. Department of Education outside of the *Town Meeting* series have included programs on arts education, the Y2K bug, lifelong learning for adults, and school-college partnerships.

Also recently, the White House has made available to community media their *Millennium Evenings*. *Millennium Evenings* at the White House are a series of lectures and cultural showcases hosted by the President and First Lady that highlight the creativity and inventiveness of the American people through our ideas, art and scientific discoveries. The lectures present prominent scholars, creators and visionaries and are accessible to the public via cyberspace over the Internet and broadcast via satellite.

These teleconferences and many others are yet another way for community media to inform their audience of the ideas, policies, and promising practices of education across the country.

STM-LIST LISTSERV

Sign up for STM-LIST — the source of satellite coordinates, program details, and panic numbers for events produced by the U.S. Department of Education and other free education-related

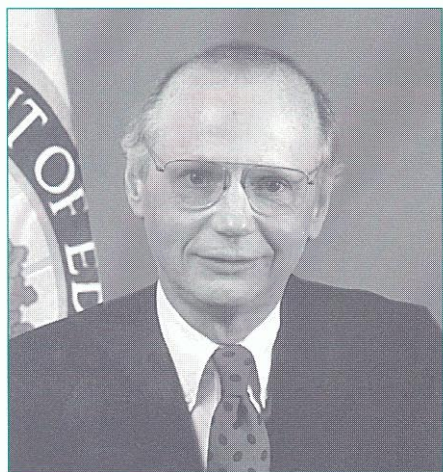
teleconferences. Cable access stations may want to subscribe to get the latest satellite coordinates and any technical information, including last-minute panic phone numbers. To subscribe to STM-LIST, address an email message to listproc@inet.ed.gov or listproc@inet.ed.gov. Write nothing in the subject line (leave it blank). Write this in the message: subscribe STM-LIST yourfirst-name yourlastname. You will receive a welcome message within 24 hours.

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

Are you ready to join over 4,400 partners in improving local schools and increasing family involvement in learning? Beyond broadcasting the *Satellite Town Meeting*, are you looking for other ways to serve education in your community? Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education as a way to build lasting alliances with other businesses, community and religious organizations, families, and schools in the common cause of improving America's schools and student achievement. It's another way to demonstrate your organization's commitment to local school, to keep informed of current educational issues and trends, and to learn about resources and publications to make your programs better. Visit the Partnership website at <http://pfie.ed.gov/> to sign up and receive a Partnership Promise Certificate.

For more information, visit our webpage at www.ed.gov/inits/stm, email us at satellite_town_meeting@ed.gov, or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

Terri Ferinde Dunham is an associate producer of the Satellite Town Meetings for the U.S. Department of Education, www.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/millennium/index.shtml



U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley.

College Credit Just a Click Away

by Joe Krause

"Where's the instructor?"

"I haven't seen 'im."

"I'll call the office, he should be there."

"Wait! Here he is . . ."

"Sorry 'bout that, I've been in a meeting and lost all sense of time."

Where's my TIE? Framitz, crammitz, . . . Just a minute . . ."

"We've got about three minutes before air time."

"OK, Hello . . . I've left my tie in the office—could you run it over to the studio for me? Yeah, thanks."

Start time: 9:30. I've got to get better organized. Let's see, power point presentation, books, transparencies. I'm ready. TIE!!!

"Thanks for running that over here! Now I'm ready. Is my hair OK?"

"Yeah."

"We'll start with the power point opening and go from there."

"Alright. Here we go . . . five, four, three, two, one . . ."

"Hello welcome to Expository Writing I broadcast from the blue studio at Kansas State University – Salina . . ."

While that isn't a typical beginning, there was a day just like that this past summer as KSU – Salina broadcast several classes over access television. The College of Technology and Aviation has a unique agreement with our local access television station in that the

college is responsible for the airwaves of the educational access channel during the day while regular access programming occurs in the evening. KSU –

Salina has been able to offer freshman level classes: intermediate algebra, college algebra, and expository writing, as well as upper level classes including "statics and dynamics." Professors use common classroom tools: transparencies, notes, handouts and videotape. There may also be a "studio audience" — students who are taking the course for credit in the studio.

The administration of the college has requested that continuing education offer classes over the local access television station since students want more freedom to take a course at home rather than in a traditional classroom setting. Likewise, students can access the course at their leisure by video taping at home then viewing the tape and responding to assignments. Each instructor can be contacted personally by email, telephone or appointment. Thus the instruction can easily be considered one-to-one.

When an instructor calls for testing, students are given the option of finding a proctor for testing. The proctor could be someone at school (a librarian or teacher), at work (a human resources person), or at the college (one of the library assistants). Continuing education sends the test to the proctor along with any pertinent information—dates, times, completion requirements, etc., and the proctor monitors the test, the student places the completed test in an envelope which is sent to the instructor. The instructor usually follows up if there is a problem, and those have been few and far between. Students using the access channel often want to learn and are challenged to find creative methods of problem solving. Likewise, the studio becomes responsible for distributing a quality product. "Talking Head" professors are out . . . we attempt to divide a class into 10 minute segments so students will see, hear, and try new material as soon as possible.

The benefits created by this system are striking: the university benefits because we are dealing with students "on demand." Secondly, we are able to deliver basic information to a wider variety of students. Even those not enrolled in a given course can learn independently. Thirdly, students can

*Kansas State
University – Salina*

The Producers Are High School Students

Cable Television for the Local Community

by Philip Cook

I am the CCTV teacher/TV station manager at New Providence High School. New Providence is a small, conservative, middle class suburban town in New Jersey. It has a population of approximately 11,000 people, is on a train line to New York City, and the main employer is Lucent Technologies.

The rapidly expanding role of computers and the Internet in business and society has put pressure on school systems to provide a wide range of technology programs for students. In New Jersey many high schools have television courses and some (including New Providence) have the ability to 'broadcast' cable programming from the school to the community.

Comcast Cable provides New Providence community access on Channel 35. Currently, the town allows the high school to provide the content on this channel which has been operating for about two years.

As TV-35 station manager, I am responsible for assembling and running programming and bulletin board announcements. All programs are produced in-house at the high school. Many are created by CCTV students themselves, the rest by me as requested by the board of education. (These programs usually document special events at the schools, BOE and in the community.)

We have a studio with a lighting grid, a control room with audio mixing and video switching, a character generator and three VHS/S-VHS industrial camcorders with tripods. Our editing is done on two S-VHS linear cuts-only systems on carts. It's basic, but it does the job!

I am teaching students the basics of television production. Once the basic technical knowledge has been covered, the course provides opportunities to make various types of programs. Students are encouraged to be creative, think for themselves, work to deadlines, and to improve the quality of their programs. Production concepts are introduced through a sequence of projects which are designed to make the students solve particular videomaking problems. For instance, one project asks the student to create a video of a conversation using only one actor; another requires the student to shoot a scene with two characters and a mirror in which one of the characters is only seen in the mirror. These exercises are tackled in groups.



Students at New Providence High School prepare for a production.

New Providence, New Jersey

On completion, the class reviews and critiques the resulting videos.

Students are tested on their basic technical knowledge, but their greatest test is producing transmittable programming for TV-35.

They are also encouraged to be critical of their own efforts and to understand that they have responsibility to create appropriate programming, as they are broadcasting shows to the people of the town. The television station often receives feedback from the audience — usually positive.

Sometimes however, the content and opinions

expressed are criticized.

The students and I have had interesting debates, often concerning the freedom-of-the-press issue. It is necessary to explain to the students that TV-35 is not

autonomous, and must operate within the parameters defined by the taxpayers and the board of education. They are our clients. To retain our funding we must work within their guidelines. It has been an important lesson for the students to learn. Some interesting projects have been shelved along the way because students have declined to make necessary adjustments to their productions. This is one way the students get a glimpse of the kinds of pressures producers and directors experience working in the 'real' television industry.

Often clients and students are working together closely at TV-35. Every month we produce two shows: *Mayor's Forum* (the mayor of New Providence and guests), and *Superintendent's Corner* (the Superintendent of Schools and guests). The students and I record the shows live in the studio. These live recordings give the students experience under the pressure of a studio shoot, a stark contrast to many of the intra-school sports and news shows which are shot ENG style, and edited with more time to refine the video.

The alliance between town and school has been a positive one for all involved and I look forward to working with my student crews to create many more exciting programs for the school and community, and turning out a few Spielbergs in the process!

Philip Cook may be reached at New Providence High School by telephone at 908.464.4700.

Looking to the Future for Two Decades

by Rod Swartz

*I*t was the best of times, it was the worst of times, as an author far better than me once said. The decade of the '80s had just begun, Reagan was president, folks were trading in their T-shirts and Levi's for suits and hard-soled shoes, and cable companies were promising urban municipalities the world in order to wire their constituents with cable. So it was across the country, and so it was in the greater Cincinnati area.

Shares of local company stock were offered to a major non-profit; smaller communities formed consortiums to achieve a stronger voice in negotiations with the big cable companies; and anybody with a power base, including school districts, negotiated to get a piece of the pie cable was offering. I knew about it. I worked for one of the large cable companies, Warner Cable. A group of about eight of us were assigned from the Columbus market and Warner's famous QUBE experiment to duplicate the successes in local programming and multiple channels in the Cincinnati area. The bottom line for all the cable companies was "get the franchise no matter what; we'll figure out how to pay for it later." So Warner offered video production packages worth about \$15,000 to every municipality and school district who showed an interest. Some districts used the money to purchase TVs, VCRs and A/V carts for their buildings, municipalities

Princeton City School District, Ohio

bought portable cameras and portable VTRs (no camcorders in those days), then tried to figure out what to do with them.

The Princeton City School District looked at these offerings and saw the potential for what it could do for students. Aaron Mackey, at the time a council member for one of the district's six municipalities and a principal in the district, formed a consortium of 46 Cincinnati suburban communities to get the best franchise agreement possible. Mackey was also picked by the school superintendent to head a district committee given the

task of using these new facilities to improve student learning. They hired a medical videographer, who was video taping medical procedures and microwaving them to other hospitals across the country, to be the coordinator for the district's newly planned closed loop network to all the schools in the district. Warner was look-

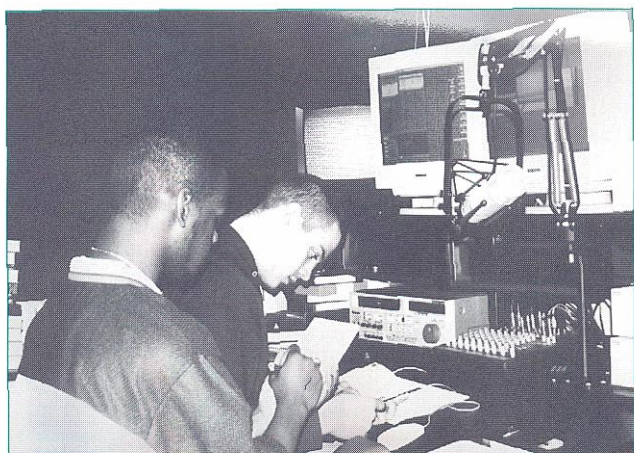
ing to see what else it might be able to offer the local school districts in their franchise area, wisely realizing that anything they would provide the schools would go a long way to build corporate support in the community (see sidebar next page). Warner saw in Princeton the ability to create a showcase for the possibilities cable could offer to schools. One of Princeton's elementary school buildings was already internally wired for video playback to every classroom in the building, funded from local businesses. Warner wired every building and classroom in the district with cable outlets, originating from the junior high school head end, so that instructional videos could be housed, requested and played back efficiently from a central location.

"Princeton was one of only two school districts in the franchise area that had put together a well-defined plan for how they were going to use the network to benefit the students," Mackey recalls. "All they wanted was a plan to show how Princeton was going to use the facilities we asked Warner to provide. The cable company was willing to work with us because of our plan."

Warner was true to their word. They provided maintenance for the facilities, assisted in moving the entire head-end equipment when it was decided to relocate to the high school, and also supported the district when it decided to go live for playback Monday through Friday after school from 4:00-10:00pm.



PITVN studio facilities at Princeton High School.



Students Brian Evans and Jeremy Ortman study new software updates on TV class's Arid Xpress non-linear editor.

Déjà Vu All Over Again

*W*hat can local access centers do to help educational institutions plan for and utilize the new communication technologies for their districts? First, get involved. Even if you're only labeled as P or G, the E needs your help. Contact the schools in your area. Find out who's in charge of their technology plan (almost every district needs to create and update a plan in order to apply for grants and funding resources available). Offer to be a member of their committee. Educational institutions are in the same position today that public access centers were 15 to 20 years ago, not knowing the difference between a sync generator from a vectorscope or a distribution amp. You can and should become a valued resource to schools looking to utilize the new technologies.

Offer to teach a media literacy course at your facility and offer credit through a local night school or adult education department in your local school district or community college. Who better than an access facility to show how the media manipulates and controls viewers? If the school doesn't offer video production courses, offer to teach one, or to assist the school in planning the curriculum and purchasing the equipment to institute a course. I have observed that computer teachers, as a group, don't know a lot about video production, and yet they need to understand how to use this new medium in their multimedia classes. You can help them teach lighting, framing, audio and editing, with only slight adaption of your current workshops.

Why should you put an emphasis on assisting local schools in their endeavors. First, it makes your access centers good neighbors in your communities. Municipalities, who control much of access funding, look more favorably on any organization that helps their schools and students. Cable companies would rather give money to schools than to access centers, because they recognize that they get a huge bang for the buck when they support education. The "Cable in the Classroom" initiative, C-Span support and teacher grants are all designed to make cable companies partners in educating students in their franchise areas. Don't fight it, learn from it and do the same in your communities. It is much easier to go before a city council during budget hearings with success stories from a school district than having to answer questions on the latest controversial program that hit the channel.

Such support also provides other benefits. Students can become your biggest base of volunteers for production efforts, both internally and with other access producers. They have energy, initiative and free time, especially during the summer, to offer support. They are also looking for groups they can join to be accepted, involved and give them self esteem. Many of our best students in TV production never fit into some of the other traditional school groups. As I tell my students on the first day of class, "I can't make you famous, only you can do that, but if you work hard and learn how to produce, everyone in this school will know who you are and come to you for help in promoting their programs." Students need to belong to a group; access centers can be that group.

Finally, today's students are going to be tomorrow's leaders, as frightening as that may sound. If they can realize the importance of community media centers, access channels on their cable system, and how media affects us every day, they will provide a base of support that can ensure that access will be around in the future, helping their children communicate effectively.

— Rod Swartz

So, by the late '80s, Princeton Instructional Television Network had five channels dedicated to playback of instructional videos for use in the classroom, a studio facility that was taken over from the old shop classes, a 20x60 foot studio, a garage for the van, television production classes, a TV activity club for students who couldn't take the class, and great support from the school board and the residents.

In fact, since Princeton did use the facilities and support Warner in their efforts to promote their efforts with the district, they actually came to us when they began to start planning their fiber rebuild. Since we were able to talk with them early, Warner included fibers for our district in their rebuild, and this time, charged us only for the fiber itself, not the construction and installation costs. Today, Princeton has two pair of fibers connected to every building in the district. One pair is used for our data lines, internet connections and eventually a PBX type phone system, saving us money on line charges from the local phone company. The other pair is used for our internal network, called the P-Loop, and for return lines from each building in the district.

SchoolNet, a funding initiative originating from the state of Ohio, provided partial funding for school districts in Ohio to wire the inside of their buildings with classroom connections for computers, display monitors and return video from every classroom in the district. This wiring infrastructure, connected to Warner's fiber connections from every building, allows us to originate from any classroom in the district to any other classroom in the district with two-way audio and video. Through the most recent franchise agreement, Warner provides fiber links to a central router network, providing access to and from every district and municipality in the franchise area. Princeton now has the capability to originate from any classroom in our district to any classroom in any other school district. As the phone commercial says, "there is no longer any there, there is only here."

I came on board in March of 1994. It was time to review and restructure the facilities and focus for the department. We replaced 3/4" decks with S-VHS for acquisition and playback of video. Our production truck, which was also used as the control room for our studio productions, was rebuilt from the ground up. Nothing is scarier than looking at a truck with empty racks and a stack of equipment boxes on August 1, knowing the



Chris Cook, instructor Judy Maccioli, and student Mike Lyons review production from van control room prior to taping studio show.

first football telecast is less than four weeks away. But we made it, and it all worked!

We increased the number of channels on the P-Loop network to nine, and made arrangements with Warner and the program providers to simulcast *CNN Headline News* and C-Span throughout the school day. We purchased additional satellite facilities to allow for downlinking teleconferences relating to education and teacher in-service and rewired the headend, edit bay and studio for efficiency and flexibility. Our latest acquisition is our non-linear edit bay, which allows our students to learn the latest technology for video editing before they enter post-secondary educational institutions or real world jobs in video or multimedia production. In many instances, this opportunity alone has meant the difference in acceptance at the college of their choice. On average, at least half of the students who take our TV Production II classes go on to major or minor in film, video or multimedia studies in college.

What is the future for the Princeton Instructional Television Network? I firmly believe that I've bought our last tape decks. CD-ROM and DVD media acquisition will provide teachers with classroom control of instructional programming and offer the ability to link to information worldwide. Imagine watching a DVD on Egypt in the classroom, pausing the disc and clicking on a link to the museum at Cairo to find out how many pyramids still exist, or being able to follow an archeological crew as they investigate ruins half a world away.

Educational access is not what it used to be, just as access centers are becoming community media centers. As Yoda once said in a galaxy far, far away, "...Always in motion is the future." Educational institutions are beginning to look ahead to see what direction their technology plans should take them. I for one find it scary, fascinating and hopeful for the future of education. At Princeton we not only talk about giving our students the keys to their future, we are providing it today.

Rod Swartz is the coordinator for the Princeton Instructional Television Network in the Princeton City School District in Cincinnati, OH. He may be reached by email at rswartz@phs.princeton.k12.oh.us, or by telephone at 513.552.8281.

KSU – Salina's Blue Studio

continued from page 9

work "at their own pace" by recording presentations. If a student doesn't understand a concept, then they can stop the tape replay the information until they "get it." Likewise, if a student is familiar enough with certain concepts, they can push along quickly, provided they are capable of handling all course requirements.

Our community benefits because courses are readily accessible to anyone who is part of the network. Those who are channel surfing may become intrigued by what is being presented. Those who want to "brush up" on algebra, or writing can do so at their leisure. Most importantly, the access classes provide for active learning—location and time allow the student choices regarding where and when to learn, while email technology allows students to discuss problems with instructors instantaneously.

"... Well, that just about wraps it up for today. Thanks for joining us at KSU – Salina for Expository Writing I. This has been a production from the blue studio of KSU – Salina, and we look forward to seeing you next time!"

[Pause] "Well, that's another lesson on the tape. Sorry about the yawns on the air!, did you see me reach for the pop can?"

"No, I think you were out of camera line."

"Man that Elmo works great! Thanks for your help."

"Yeah, see you Friday."

Joe Krause is coordinator of continuing education at Kansas State University's College of Technology and Aviation in Salina, Kansas. He may be reached by email at krausej@mail.sal.ksu.edu or by telephone at 785.826.2617.

Educational Access

continued from page 4

channels are actually controlled by people at the local level. Programming is produced to meet local needs, not because it fits some larger demographic profile or has been cleansed of all controversy to avoid offending anyone or everyone. Programming may even be imported but it's chosen by people at the local level.

Schools that teach us to think in lockstep deprive us of our collective and individual creativity and originality, of our ability to challenge the status quo, and to look at ideas, problems, solutions in new ways. The First Amendment imbeds in our collective being the right to hear and to be heard, the right to dispute, argue, talk, discuss, persuade, be persuaded, to challenge and be challenged — in other words, the arts of democracy. As John Frohnmeyer, former head of the National Endowment for the Arts says, the guts of the First Amendment is still the nose-to-nose ability to stand there with someone with whom we disagree and argue respectfully and logically toward some kind of broadening of the middle.

Rob Brading is chairman of the Alliance for Community Media and executive director of Multnomah Community Television in Gresham, Oregon, [rbrading@mctv.org](http://mctv.org), telephone 503.667.7636.

On Teaching Television Production

by Brett Saunders

If you are a teacher of television production, I imagine that we have the same basic goals. (You'll have to forgive me if I don't use the latest educational jargon; I get confused about whether I'm allowed to have "goals" anymore; perhaps they should be objectives or benchmarks or outcomes or some other term I've forgotten.) Whatever our specific goals may be, my basic questions are: How do we reach them? How do we help our students to achieve them? How does the work of my students compare with the work of yours? How do we gain more support from our administrators? From the rest of the faculties? From our communities?

If my memory is correct, several decades ago, Marshall McLuhan said that going to school interrupts a child's 'real' education. Well, I don't want to be an interruption. I believe that what I try to help my students learn will have value throughout their lives and will help them to make more sense of the world.

McLuhan was referring to how much children learn when out of school, even before beginning to go to school, especially from electronic media, which at the time was mainly television. I know that we all have heard the statistics about how many hours per day or week or year a child is exposed to commercial messages, to violent images, to contrived relationships, and to characterizations of various ethnic, racial, age and sex stereotypes. Television, after all, is our window on our society, our culture, our world.

I realize that if you are reading this, you are a sophisticated and knowledgeable television viewer. Probably you didn't become that way by taking a class in high school. My students are no different from you. I'm certain that if you asked them, they'd tell you that they already know all about television before they get into high school. Television, they'd say, has no effect on them. Why, they don't even watch television. They're too busy with their friends, their jobs, their music, and, when time permits, with their school work. But if asked a few more

questions, they admit to having seen most of the programs I might mention; they know more commercials than I could remember; and their music is as much visual as it is aural. When my students hear a popular song, the images that come to mind are the images of music videos. I know I'm a bit old fashioned, but things like that bother me. I think that we should be able to create our own images and learn to interpret our world for ourselves.

So in my classroom, I believe that process is more important than product. I try to help my students to develop skills. I work hard to give my students experiences where the need to communicate effectively is necessary. Realistically, I know that most of my students will not become media professionals, but all will use the skills developed in my classes. I'm also realistic about the reasons students select my courses. Television is familiar. It seems like fun. It seems easy. And, of course, it seems easier and more fun than any of the alternative course choices.

The problem with this way of thinking is how others perceive the medium of television. When television is done well, it looks easy. Since we all grow up with television and expect to always see television programming at its highest levels, sometimes our audience becomes dissatisfied with less than highly professional and commercial results. Students feel this pressure, and many teenagers are easily frustrated when they don't achieve the success they expect. It often seems that administrators are frustrated with less than perfect results as well. Winning awards and receiving recognition has great importance in most administrators' eyes and for most school districts. However, this is somewhat contrary to my personal belief that we learn, we

improve, and we learn to improve to become better people, people who can be more productive and self-actualizing, not to prove our self-worth by besting others.

I'm sure you already know that production is probably the best way for students, actually for anyone, to understand the medium. When we construct our own images, we learn to deconstruct the images created by others. We begin to understand the power of the medium and how to use pictures and sounds to communicate messages, to promote ideas. When my students create programming, they also learn to test, to analyze audience reaction. They figure out what data are used to convey a message, to make a point. Most of my students are not planning for careers in the

television industry. And most don't realize what they are getting into when they enter my classroom for the first time. They are teenagers developing communication skills. I expect them to always strive to do their best and to improve. But just as high school musicians are sometimes off pitch or out of tune, and just as high school athletes don't score each time they run a play, and just as high school teachers don't

have the answers to all students' questions, my high school television production students may not create programming that can compete at the level we have all come to expect from the major commercial production houses. They do know, however, that what they produce will be seen by a real audience.

My television production students produce *Dragon Digest*, a half-hour live-to-tape public access cable television program. Our objective with *Dragon Digest* is to serve as a public relations tool for our school. We copy studio news and news-magazine style formats, trying

Lake Orion
High School,
Michigan

When we construct our own images, we learn to deconstruct the images created by others. We begin to understand the power of the medium and how to use pictures and sounds to communicate messages, to promote ideas.

Connecting Southwest Kansas with the World

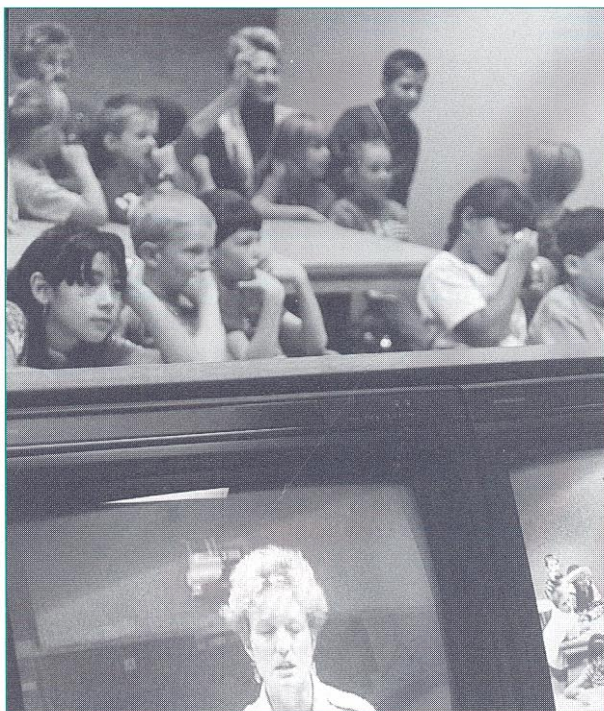
by Carol J. Swinney

In 1989, nine school districts and one special education cooperative translated a dream into reality. With business partner, Pioneer Communications of Ulysses, Kansas, the High Southwest Plains Interactive Television Network (HSPN) was launched. Using DS3 technology, fiber optic, digital instruction took its place in the curriculum. Although much of the original motivation for establishing this network was to provide academic opportunities not available in small, rural high schools, the additional benefits of two-way interactive television telecommunications have become an integral part of education in Southwest Kansas.

Connecting high school students. HSPN provides a regular schedule of high school classes each year. In the 1998-99 school year, more than 200 students were enrolled in 25 courses. Of these 25 courses, 18 were either dual credit or college credit classes. In addition to providing access to upper level mathematics and foreign language, two-way interactive television affords many students an economical and available head start to their college career.

Connecting life long learners. Realizing the need to provide academic opportunities for the adult learner, HSPN has teamed with Fort Hays State University, Garden City Community college, and Seward County Community College to provide more than 30 evening college courses each semester. Easily, this is the fastest growing segment of distance learners. Living in an area of low population density and geographic isolation, working adults appreciate the opportunity to update skills, learn new skills and complete degree programs.

Connecting elementary school students. Beginning in fall 1998, HSPN began a series of electronic field trips designed to provide special learning opportunities for elementary school students. Utilizing the resources of HEB Televentures, a satellite program focusing on art and science, and the two-way interac-



Top - Third graders enjoy an electronic visit to the Leo Richardson Zoo in Garden City. Above - Ecology teacher Travis McAtee addressing students in Cimarron, Ingalls and Lakin simultaneously.

tive television classroom of the Lee Richardson Zoo of Garden City, children were able to participate in special learning opportunities without the added time and expense of travel.

Connecting communities. The area of Southwest Kansas served by HSPN reaches from the far Southwest corner of our state (Elkhart) to near Dodge City. The southernmost point in the network is Liberal while reaching north to Scott City. In this area of some 10,000 square miles, citizens appreciate the opportunity to travel "electronically." Regular communications with the State Department of Education link educators with their leaders in Topeka. Special "connections" with state and national officials allow citizens to communicate without spending inordinate amounts of time on the road. Two-way interactive television facilitates communication between Southwest Kansans and their leaders and colleagues across the state and the nation.

Connecting with the world. In the spring of 1994, six HSPN high schools joined with three lycées outside of Paris, France, to study a special geography curriculum. Five times throughout the semester, the students enjoyed fiber optic connections which allowed them to see and hear their European counterparts. This pilot program demonstrated the breadth of possibilities available to the students of SW Kansas. Fall 1999 brings the promise of an ongoing electronic connection in South America, as two HSPN instructors begin a two year teaching stint in Ecuador. As always, the possibilities are only limited by our imaginations.

Connecting with the 21st century.

Although HSPN still enjoys state-of-the-art digital technology, opportunities to expand and enhance the learning potential of the network are continually being explored. Joining with a Virtual High School project, involving 18 SW Kansas schools, HSPN is eagerly exploring the development and design of online courses to be delivered over the Internet. A blending of technolo-

*High Southwest
Plains Interactive
Television Network*



Students in Lakin join Ingalls college composition instructor Shannon Smith and students in Scott City.

gies will afford the learner the advantages of the asynchronous World Wide Web, while utilizing the synchronous nature of two-way interactive television instruction. This best of both worlds could combine to provide real time—any time learning for the 21st century learner.

After 10 years of service to Southwest Kansas, the High Southwest Plains Interactive Television Network continues to seek new educational avenues. Growing from the original 10 sites, HSPN now boasts 21 ITV locations which include 14 school districts, two community colleges, one four-year university, two special education cooperatives, and the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center. Fiber optic technology has flung open the doors of our classrooms and raised the windows of our consciousness. Southwest Kansans are proud to have pioneered two-way interactive television classrooms and are eager to accept the next challenge of applying technology to the learning environment. For further information regarding HSPN, contact Carol J. Swinney, Network Coordinator, or Jerry Walters, Technical Coordinator at Southwest Plains Regional Service Center, PO Box 1010, Sublette, KS 67877, or by email at cswinney@swprsc.org.

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TEACHING TELEVISION

continued from page 14

to give our viewers a look at Lake Orion High School from a student's perspective. We highlight the important events and people in our building and learn to tell the stories of our school's culture using video as our medium.

We also produce *LO-AM*, our live daily school news/announcements program seen in every classroom and on monitors all around our building. We work hard to attract the attention of our student body by playing requested music throughout our program's openings and closings and by creating a variety of video openings. When the tones sound to begin the class period, we start the opening tape and a 30-second countdown appears. One of the best methods I've found to help students to learn editing is to have them produce the countdowns. We use a variety of techniques, including animation, live-action, computer art, character generator pages, and combinations of methods. The countdown is followed by a 30-60 second video segment that are also created to gain the student body's attention. As many as sixty different opening sequences will be produced in a school year. As the taped opening segment concludes with our program logo, the director calls for a dissolve into the cover shot of our anchors on set, and the information begins. Along with our talking heads, the production students also prepare prerecorded segments such as promos for school events, messages from administrators or counselors, and special recognition presentations for deserving students. *LO-AM* ends with CG pages of the names of students celebrating their birthday.

Special projects take up the rest of our time. For example, to begin the course scheduling process this year, we produced a video introducing the student body to the variety of elective courses offered in our school. And finally, each term my students are given a theme ("Who Am I?" "Being Thankful" "Respect" "Dragon Pride") to be interpreted using their video-graphic skills and shown to the class during the exam period.

I've been teaching for a long time, and although the material is always new for my students, if I didn't continue to change what goes on in my classroom, I'd run the risk of boring myself. I will admit to you that I borrow ideas from everyone, and I alter borrowed assignments to fit my students needs. I expect that if you teach, you do the same. If you get any information of value from what I have written, I'm pleased. I'd be even more pleased if you would share what you do in your classroom with me.

Brett Saunders is television production instructor at Lake Orion High School in Lake Orion, MI. He may be reached by email at bsaunders@lakeorion.k12.mi.us, or by telephone at 248.693.5420.

Life as an Educational Access Channel

by Cheryl Magill

This has been the year of change, the only consistent element you can truly count on. We have a new identity—HCC-TV, Howard Community College Educational Access Channel—the result of our cable company's channel reassignment. It's best not to develop an identity tied to a channel number since the cable companies are preparing for digital and will be reassigning channels continually. HCC-TV is now cablecasting a full 24-hour schedule instead of a shared channel with our local school system, and we are changing format to Beta SP and non-linear editing for our original programs.

Our evolution was typical: the TV Studio started as a part of the college's audio visual department. It consisted of a single color camera, a record deck, and eventually, simple-cuts-only editing capabilities. The sole function was to produce instructional support for classroom use. In 1982, HCC's "Cable 8" (our original identity) started to cablecast. The programming consisted of telecourses.

This provided a way for the college to deliver distance learning and increase the number of courses offered. Maryland enrolls more telecourse students nationally than any of the other states. Maryland Public Television broadcasts approximately 10 courses per semester, which limits a student's choices. The added benefit of our own cable facility has allowed Howard Community College's distance learning program to grow over the years and now enables the institution to participate as a pilot school for the "Going the Distance" program. "Going the Distance" provides the opportunity for students to acquire their AA degree through distance learning.

In 1985, the college asked if the Howard County Public Schools would like to share the educational access channel. The school system accepted and a split schedule was developed between the two entities. HCC's Cable 8 began producing some original programming; mostly studio based productions on educational and informative topics

Howard County, Maryland



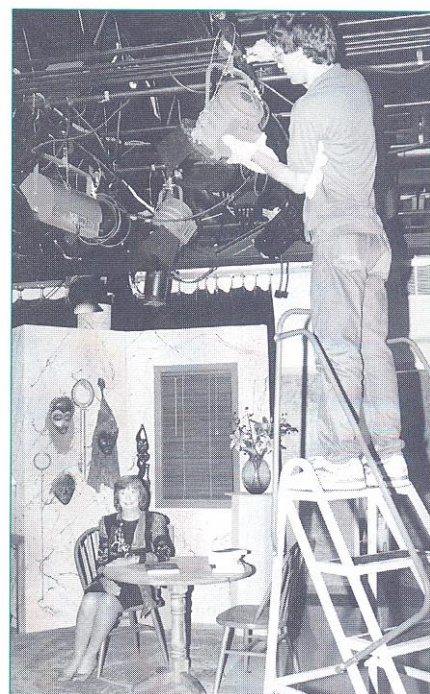
Cameraman Donald Bogdanski and floor director Beth Homan give host Helen Mitchell a cue.

for the county's viewers. The programming format was 3/4" u-matic, and the studio was a converted classroom with low lighting instruments to melt even the heartiest of guests. Sound familiar? Our

saving grace was that we raided the dumpsters of the local public television station and redesigned our "treasures" to create the look of real television production. The thought was that maybe viewers would be visually held for a moment while channel surfing and, with any luck, our content might keep them watching.

In 1992, the college reorganized and the TV Studio was moved under the Fine and Performing Arts Department of the instructional division. The studio was relocated to the administration building and our production format was upgraded to 3/4" SP u-matic and a slightly higher ceiling (but with our own air conditioning, no more melting guests).

One of the most effective reasons for our successful evolution and upgrade, thus far, is the county cable grant; monies from the franchise fees were dedicated to the advancement of cable access in the county. Over the years HCC-TV staff has also changed from college-provided employees to grant-provided employees. A shift in the nature of



Bogdanski focuses the key light on host Helen Mitchell.

our production reflects these changes. Our staff is small, a television studio manager, two producer/directors and a production assistant. The television facility continues to facilitate the telecourses, as the mainstay of our programming. We also provide a playback service, *Play it Again*, to students, who for any reason missed their telecourse.

Production of original programs of an informational/educational/entertainment nature is the focus of the two grant producers. Our original programming is moving away from the "talking heads" look. Our shows include more location shooting and going out into the community provides a perfect vehicle for enhancing the college's image.

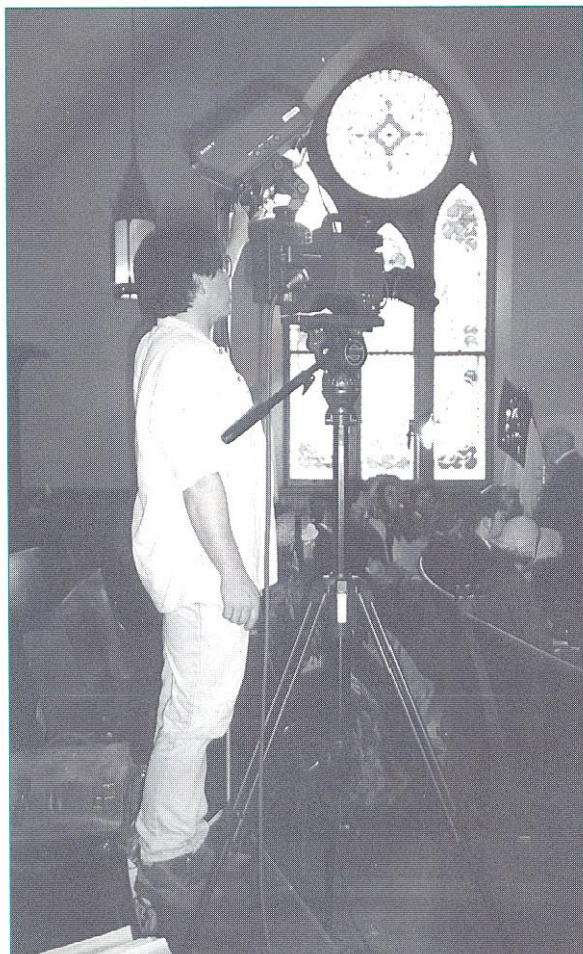
Health Today, our longest running series, promotes health awareness and wellness. Hosted by Florence Miller, educational coordinator for Blue Cross and Blue Shield, each show discusses the latest health issues with medical experts. This program is funded in part by Blue Cross and Blue Shield. (Currently, *Health Today* is shown in five other counties and Baltimore City). The funding of *Health Today* supports special cable projects such as a documentary on Liberia.

The *Writing Life* is produced at our facility and is the product of the Howard County Poetry and Literature Society. This half-hour series features nationally and internationally known poets and writers discussing their work and their craft. For a modest fee, we provide the production facilities and cablecast this show. Our relationship with HoCoPoLitSo also includes distribution of their show to six other cable access channels.

Performance Profiles is our version of *Entertainment Tonight* on a monthly basis. This program showcases the fine and performing arts of Howard County with an expressed interest in the college's events. This program was born out HCC's commitment to the arts and serves as an excellent tool to promote local artists.

On Location, currently going out of production, brings viewers information on county services and agencies, special events, point-of-interest and local history. If our staffing ever increases, we will more than likely bring this series back. It allowed us to become involved and have a significant presence in the community.

Cinemarkland, replacing *On Location*, is our newest program giving viewers an inside look at film making in the state of Maryland. The Maryland Film Commission pays to distribute the series to seven other county cable access channels. Specials are another part of



Cameraman Jose Tenorio set the shot for Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Declaration on the set of *For the Love of Wisdom*.

our original offerings.

An Evening at Smith Theatre (our version of *Great Performances*), a documentary on Columbia, *Community Forums*, *Cry of the Pepperbird*, a documentary on the history of Liberia, and others are airing or under production.

Our schedule includes several series that are exchanged with other cable access stations in the central Maryland area, such as *Global Village*, *Neighborhood Beat*, *Cardin on Congress*, *Jazz Suite* and *Getting Connected*. The sharing of programming affords us the opportunity to "hobnob with our fellow wizards." Acquiring free programming from NASA, Classic Arts Entertainment and College Music TV (to name a few) and licensing programming such as *Movie Magic*, *Inside Stories*, *Sprockets* and *Classic Films* round out to a pretty full schedule. HCC-TV provides the community, free of charge, a monthly schedule to our programming. Viewers call in and leave their address and are then put on

our mailing list. Our schedule and information about our programming is also found on our web page with Howard Community College. Come visit us at www.howardcc.edu and click the satellite dish. Our default for programming is a community bulletin board; this service is free to all Howard County non-profit organizations. It provides information about the college and its events, community events, as well as personal birthday and congratulation announcements.

Through the charge back system, which offsets the cost of these productions, we provide (at bargain basement prices) VHS documentation of college lectures and classes for faculty and staff, dubbing of video course materials and script-to-screen production of video for classroom or institutional use, and public service announcements for the college.

A new direction for the TV Studio is telecourse production. The spring of '96 saw the addition of *College Algebra* to our schedule and the fall of '97 premiered our largest undertaking to date, 25 half-hour telecourses on philosophy, *For the Love of Wisdom* (currently distributed nationally by PBS Adult Learning Service). We almost needed an

undertaker. After wearing so many hats for this production, we had a hard time finding our heads. Now that the dust has cleared, we are really proud of this one.

Our facility also has a rate card for outside the college production. Monies generated from outside work are used to offset the expenses of our special projects.

Today, HCC-TV is in the stratosphere of the cable channels (where all access channels seem to end up). However, our local cable company did help with getting the word out about our new spot on the remote. We are still in the process of upgrading our format to Beta SP and beginning to lay the groundwork for digital conversion. Once all the world is digital, the playing fields for TV will be more level. Then, just maybe, cable access will come into its own.

Cheryl Magill is the TV Studio manager at HCC-TV. She can be reached by email at cmagill@howardcc.edu, or by telephone at 410.772.4815.

Public Access: K through 12 Connection

by Pat Garlinghouse

Introduction. What would kids' television look like if kids were in charge? Although education in the United States continues to set exemplary standards, students who fall outside the norm need a boost to help make their educational experience equitable. Students whose learning styles depend on other than the audio/visual modes and who, for example, reside in full-time correctional facilities need alternative educational instruction.

Public access knows about individualized educational services—it too falls outside the norm. Public access also has the flexibility, resources, infrastructure and training assistance to provide in-depth media production services and experiences to various groups. Most critical is the issue: How to reach the students who resist the traditional classroom setting for education?

Background. The writer's interest in public access collaborations with schools began in Austin, Texas where the local public access center received Artist-in-Education grants from the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA). Local media artists, certified through the state arts program, assume residencies in the schools varying from one week to 10 months.

The TCA seeks to advance the arts as an essential component of a well-balanced curriculum. Through community partnerships, the commission strives to ensure that the arts, artists and educators become an integral part of the educational experience of every Texas student, pre-K through high school. Public access facilitates the integration of arts services daily.

Trained artists in the visual, performing, literary, media and oral history fields act as catalysts for exemplary arts activities and content development to supplement and strengthen existing arts programs in Texas schools and communities. Residencies take place in schools or communities through grants to community-based arts organizations, alternative learning centers, local arts agencies, edu-



Sidtrice Crichlow and Ashley Reece reporting the *Fast on Facts* news from Thurgood Marshall Elementary in Houston.

Houston, Texas

cational institutions, and other nonprofit entities. The schools like the hands-on educational experience that public access delivers.

For the purpose of this article, an educational

partnership is a direct interchange with public access and a school program to provide direct instruction and in-depth training that would not otherwise be possible in the traditional school setting. The learning will occur not simply as a means to teach technical production skills but will extend curriculum, enhance learning skills, increase the cultural arts of the involved participants, or incorporate a teacher training component.

School Partnerships. Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, Houston. HMS takes video production and media literacy training to traditional elementary schools and high schools. The kindergarten and first grade math and arts programs at Thurgood Marshall Elementary,

in the North Forest Independent School District, worked with HMS to produce a video that highlighted significant student accomplishments. At Thurgood Marshall Elementary, young students showcased their highly accomplished math program, *Fast on Facts*. The student produc-

Trained artists in the visual, performing, literary, media and oral history fields act as catalysts for exemplary arts activities and content development to supplement and strengthen existing arts programs in Texas schools and communities.

tion, *News, News, and More News*, featured "KTME" student anchors and a roving reporter who provided late breaking news from the field.

Wheatley High School, Houston. A full-scale video and media program at Wheatley High School serves as a pilot for HMS's partnership with the Fifth Ward Community Enrichment Center (CEC), where the popular course will continue as an after-school program. The CEC's purpose is to provide alter-

native educational activities to youth who would normally be housed on the streets. The Center's parent organization, the Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation, reflects Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown's Neighborhood Oriented Government



Cindy Colvin captions for the OPTICA students as instructor Marshall Parker explains camera techniques.

(NOG) program where the city partners with neighborhoods throughout Houston. The entire fifth ward enterprise "was founded and incorporated by concerned residents, civic leaders, business owners, ministers and educators. The organization stimulates the growth of a healthy community through housing development, economic revitalization, neighborhood safety and beautification." In the words of Mayor Brown, "When we bring these partnerships together, there isn't anything we can't do!"

Community Partnerships. SCAN -

Southwest Correctional Arts Network, Austin. Students from detention facilities tell their stories on video about life in penal institutions using poetry and drama: stories about childhoods riveted with crime, drugs and family instability. Youth initially view the media with disdain. Often the media portrays a negative image of the people they know, a message they are quick to internalize. Newly found media skills open up a Pandora's box of emotions and images that the students are eager to convey. At first the stories are gruesome, shocking and hopeless—friends being jailed or killed, and vast personal destruction. Once the new videographers grasp the power of television, stories change to create ideal relationships, schools without violence, and personal wish lists. Students develop storyboards, scripts, and complete production plans for video shorts consisting of their experiences in jail, on the streets, in gangs, and disenfranchised from the mainstream. Students from opposing gangs

work matter-of-factly, side-by-side on video shoots. Alternative education is their salvation.

Project ESOS: Educating Students for Opportunity and Service, Austin. Funded by the Austin Independent School District, Project ESOS introduces students to educational service-oriented opportunities close to home. The public access video and media literacy component is the catalyst for the exposure and promotion of student projects. Media education introduces students to art forms, often for the first time. The products are community PSAs about teen issues such as gang involvement, crime, drugs, sex, and peer acceptance. One such project featured a documentary and a series of PSAs about community policing. As new videographers, students eagerly set up and documented a neighborhood community policing program, designed signs, conducted community meetings, discovered funding sources, and sustained a neighborhood watch for students on the way home from school.

Talento Bilingue de Houston, Houston.

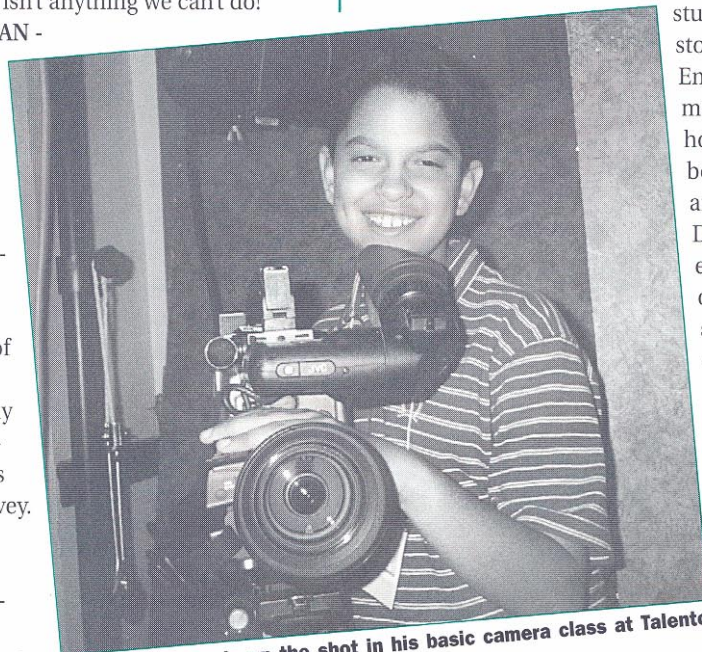
Similar to the previous, HMS takes their teaching program to area schools and community centers. In collaboration with Talento Bilingue de Houston (TBH), a community center located in the Guadalupe Plaza of East Houston, HMS provides students with resources to produce their own public access series show, host concerts, and direct truck shoots. Students learn to operate cameras and edit suites with ease. In an exhibit housed in the Children's Museum of Houston, TBH

students present *My Block*, a story about life in Houston's East End. The camera follows a young man whose realities include housing projects, hip-hoppers, books, music, arts and crafts, and TBH. According to TBH Director Richard Reyes, "The exhibit includes many of the objects presented in the video, so that visitors may actually experience the same feelings as the storyteller." Students from TBH have a regular series on WTP-TV (We The People TV), Houston MediaSource's public access channel.

Beyond K through 12

Cross Cultural Partnerships. Zydeco: Frenchtown, USA,

Houston. HMS and The University of Houston English/Oral History Department created a documentary that portrays the oral history of Zydeco and the Creoles in Houston. Under the guidance of Professor Carl Lindahl and staff instructor Tsep Solis Lozano, the students combined their storytelling skills with media production skills. The students interviewed



Gabriel Veras sets up the shot in his basic camera class at Talento Bilingue de Houston.

Frenchtown residents to uncover the rich heritage of Zydeco in Houston.

The 60-minute documentary traced the history of Creoles in Louisiana, their migration to Houston and the culture that evolved from a rural tradition to a mixture of rural and urban traditions. Unique to the Creoles is the tradition of the La Las, or house dances, and the music that accompanies these events. A combination of African and

French music played on accordion and washboard electrified and infused with blues elements evolved into what we now know as modern Zydeco. The music video documents performances by Zydeco artists Wilbert Thibideaux, Tony Delafosse, and Wilfred Chavis, and the viewer gets an insider's look into the history of Zydeco in Houston.

OPTICA, Houston. OPTICA (Our Path: Together Initiating Culture Access) unites children and adults with hearing loss in artistic expression and creates accommodations media for cross-cultural communication. The program fosters cooperation and learning for both ASL and HoH people so that they can share their heritage of arts and culture with the hearing community. To fulfill the requirements for the three-year project funded by the US Department of Education, Houston MediaSource will teach media production skills to the group. The instruction will take place at Houston's Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. PwHL's goal is to teach media art in satellites throughout the country as part of their regular curriculum.

Year One. The media classes will help youth and adults develop the skills to promote their events and culture, as well as gain access to the hearing community offerings.

Year Two. Plays, community awareness spots, access tapes for hearing theater and museums, and promotional videos will be made and tested within the hearing loss community. The adults from the classes will be the talent and create a production made by the hearing loss community for the hearing community.

Year Three. The advanced groups will take the "deaf tested" videos to the hearing community for evaluation. Materials developed by the hearing loss community will be disseminated throughout the local arts community, and nationally, to demonstrate that "there are cost effective methods of providing accommodation to all people with hearing loss in all places at all times." PBS will air a play, written by a person with hearing loss. Taped clips of activities that show OPTICA in action will be assembled and disseminated. A panel discussion about the experience for promoting access and cultural differences will also be made for PBS. Copies of the tape will be shown locally and marketed to other cities to illustrate the capabilities and needs of people with hearing loss.



HMS Board President Lou Gregory joins in the ribbon cutting for the newest HMS satellite site at the Fifth Ward Enrichment Center.

The commercial media does not normally build upon the capabilities of PwHL nor use language that is disability correct. Stories about PwHL tend to lean toward benevolence and pity. Through the efforts of public access, PwHL will produce videos that tell the real story to more people. PwHL will learn how to best use their resources and develop the expertise that can educate both the hearing loss and hear-

ing community.

As PwHL acquire control over their environment, through the acquisition of video skills, they will reach their goals:

- ▲ Personal growth as PwHL move from passive acceptance of not being able to understand speech or attend public functions to the active pursuit of accommodations access.

- ▲ Greater integration into mainstream America.

- ▲ To assist the hearing world to see the ease and cost effectiveness of captioned programming.

- ▲ To desensitize Corporate America through the process of seeing hands signing, hearing aids, and service dogs helping those PwHL in the community.

Malisa W. Janes, RhD and OPTICA student, states after several course sessions, "I have been having so much fun with Marshall. I know he thinks I am a complete nut! His class is the play time I've been missing! Trying something new where I don't have the artistic or technical skills...but have the ideas and can be a klutz and just enjoy myself is a wonderful feeling! Who knows I might even find a VERY hidden talent—but at least will know how to recruit those with the skills I lack! It makes all the hard work of writing the grant and trying to get them to administer it correctly worth the hassle. New roads opened! I'm having fun...and that is what life is all about!"

Conclusion

What is the ultimate result of alternative educational programs in terms of graduation, vocational opportunities and life survival skills? We understand the benefit to persons able to interpret their surroundings and able to take in information, make decisions, and participate in society. We know that some programs help keep students within the mainstream educational tracks. Other programs allow students to be successful through skills training. Success builds confidence and the ability to control one's environment and one's own destiny. The contributions of public access to education cannot be underestimated.

Pat Garlinghouse is executive director of Houston MediaSource. She may be reached by email at patg@accesshouston.org, or by telephone at 713.524.7700.

Change the Channels, sil vous plait!

by Joyce Pitt

Have you ever wanted to learn a foreign language and just didn't get around to learning it? The Enid Public Schools and Pegasys Community Access Channel in Enid, Oklahoma have just what you need to do it in the comfort of your own home.

The Oklahoma legislature passed a law requiring all children in grades four through eight to learn a foreign language, beginning in 1993. This presented a challenge, as there is a severe shortage of foreign language teachers, and it was an unfunded mandate. Something innovative was needed to fulfill this mandate to reach all students.

The answer was found when Pegasys and the school district joined together to make it possible to do this both efficiently and economically.

Dr. Garland Keithley, superintendent of schools, and Dr. Ruth Ann Erdner, director of curriculum, decided to offer both Spanish and French in order to give a choice to the district's students. In the fall of 1993, the school district hired two certified teachers to teach Spanish and French. Pegasys provided the studio and the technical director for the first year, and we were ready to begin. Beginning in the second year, the schools were responsible for hiring the technical director.

The language classes were offered to fourth grade students in 12 buildings, a total of approximately 500 students. Classroom teachers, who have attended in-service sessions to learn the language, serve as monitors in the classroom. Pegasys produced the classes live directly to each classroom by way of the local cable system. For the next two years, a grade level was added until eventually all fourth, fifth, and sixth grade classes were reached.

Currently there are 11 Enid schools participating, with all 11 taking Spanish, and four large schools taking French in addition. In the two-language schools, the French is taped, and then shown at the same time as the live Spanish. This enables students and their parents to choose between the two languages.

These classes are offered live during the day, and again at night on tape. This has enabled many people in the community to learn another language. Many times the teachers are stopped in the community and told how much someone has enjoyed the opportunity to learn the language.

This exposure has spread to more than just the Enid public schools. Beginning in 1994, Pegasys and the school system joined together in another venture. Because the shortage of teachers is statewide, programs were offered to other school districts. This was especially advantageous to small districts who have neither enough students nor resources to hire a teacher full time. A total of 10 districts in Oklahoma and Arkansas have purchased the program. The fee is divided between the schools and Pegasys. Pegasys hires someone to make copies of the week's lessons, and these are mailed out to the outlying schools at the end of the week. The



French teacher Nancy Koehn in the PEGASYS studio.

Enid, Oklahoma

and Pegasys is a good one, with both sides working together. For example, after a couple of years, it became obvious that the program was here to stay.

A problem became clear as the number of Pegasys community producers continued to grow. The foreign language program was tying up a lot of studio time, as there are currently a total of 16 20-minute programs weekly. This left less time for community producers for both studio and editing time.

A solution was found when Pegasys decided to construct another smaller studio for the use of the foreign language program. It was decided to design the studio so that it could be used for both the language program and community produced talk shows. A desk was designed by Pegasys staff and built by the school system so that it could be used for either type of program. The studio is now permanently set up for classes and occasionally used for either taped or live talk shows, such as election coverage.

The language teachers visit classrooms on the days that there is no production. Pegasys has also made available video cameras for use by the technical director on these days. This allows the taping of individual classes and students, which is then aired on subsequent programs. This has been especially popular with students. It has also enhanced the number of evening viewers as parents and other family tune in to watch their child on television.

Pegasys also contributes in another way. The studio is set up with two pre-set cameras, and is manned by only the teacher and the technical director. This presents a real dilemma when the technical director is ill or otherwise unable to work. On these occasions, Pegasys staff steps in to manage the program, and it goes on as usual. If a teacher is sick, there are back-up tapes that were made for this eventuality.

Pegasys has fulfilled its mission as an educational access station through this cooperative venture. It has contributed to the education of its viewing public as well as the school students, with members of the Enid community learning another language.

Joyce Pitt is the elementary Spanish language teacher for the Enid Public Schools. She has been with the program since its inception, and wrote the curriculum for the Spanish classes, as there is no textbook used. She may be reached through Pegasys by telephone at 580.237.0099.

Education, Community and Radio

by Mike Reisz

Short History of WDPS-FM.

WDPS went on the air in 1977 as an FCC "Class D" radio station licensed to broadcast noncommercial programming at 10 watts of power. It was part of a radio/television magnet program established as part of the desegregation plan for the Dayton Public Schools. We are now a 6000-watt stereo station using an STL (studio transmitter link) to get our signal to our transmitter site. The television component of the program was initially a production-only studio but became a local educational access channel in 1984 and is a member of the Alliance for Community Media.

Curriculum: From Pre-Vocational to Vocational. Originally the radio/television program was an academic program. Restructuring in the district saw the program move to a vocational building. Once the instructors had completed vocational certification requirements for the state of Ohio, the program was certified as a vocational program and a vocational approach was applied based on state guidelines for vocational education. Some of the major changes were related to approaching the materials and skills from a marketing perspective with a strong emphasis on school-to-work skills and life skills. These important concepts often put vocational students ahead of other students in understanding the world of work and its integration into the workers' lives outside their careers.

Programming. Until recently the school district had never put much demand on me concerning programming content (other than keeping "lyric-related" complaints to a minimum) so I have always programmed by the philosophy that noncommercial radio should serve the public with programming that commercial radio won't.

I have tried to do that as best I can while still preparing students for careers in commercial radio. The most useful method has been to apply commercial conceptualization, script writing, and production skills into the production of public service announcements. This has added the benefit of providing a real service to the community while developing student skills.

A major part of WDPS's programming is music. Over the years we have experimented with a wide range of music shows including loud rock, folk, electronic dance music, and hip hop/rap. Recently the district decided it wanted to attract a more adult demographic to its programming. Now we program about one-third of our hours as straight-ahead jazz (this is more of a traditional jazz format). Another third consists of an adult format featuring contemporary jazz, blues, R&B, and AAA (adult alternative) artists. This new programming position is designed to have a broader appeal but still not sound like a tightly formatted commercial radio station. So far, the format has received good response.

Additionally, we have specialty programs for world music and blues, syndicated public affairs, and educational features.

Students are also involved in producing more in-depth public affairs programs in conjunction with the district's designs for communicating with

WDPS-FM
Dayton,
Ohio



A student operates the WDPS-FM control room console.

the public. The district will often use the cable TV channel and the radio station to conduct "town hall" meetings and other education-related programming. There is a yearly "candidates night" in which local school board candidates get a chance to address the community in a live call-in show. Other district-related programs include the annual *Martin Luther King Jr. Speech Contest* and *On the Line*, a monthly live call-in show hosted by our superintendent. Recently the superintendent and school board president addressed the public the day after the Columbine High School killings. This was an opportunity to alert the public and school district personnel about the district's policies, plans for school safety, and counseling resources for staff and students.

Response. Generally, response from the public is good. The types of things listeners respond to are surprising. In general we get very positive feedback in regard to the actual music we program. The public affairs shows seem to get the attention of listeners, especially the superintendent's call-in show. Listeners also like the short features such as *Stardate*, *Earth & Sky*, and *Family Health*. The most complaints we get are about student mispronunciations.

Students come into the program with the image of commercial radio, but from the first day of class I stress the importance of the type of broadcasting we do

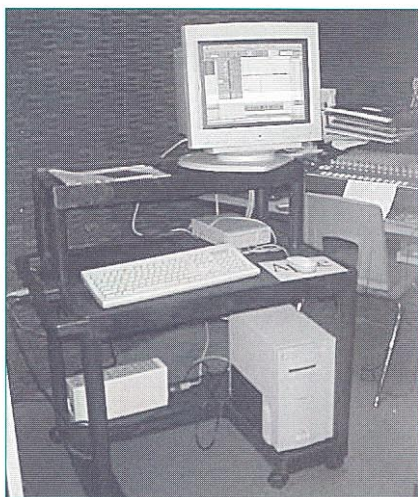


WDPS-FM Production Studio B.

and most of them buy into the professionalism I try to instill in them. They frequently will talk to me about mistakes they've heard. They do grumble sometimes about wanting to play "pop" music but in general they come out of the three years in the program with a broader understanding of what radio can be, as well as developing a liking for other types of music. They also usually have a good time producing creative public service messages and develop an appreciation for them.

Technical Information. We are now incorporating digital production technology using Digidesign's "ProTools" digital workstations, Fidelipak's Dynamax digital cart machines, Sony Mini Disc optical recorders, and DAT.

Although these newer digital technologies are becoming commonplace we still teach basic analog tape production because many smaller stations on a more limited equipment upgrade budget still use open reel recorders. Purchasing the best equipment we can is important because not only is dead air bad for programming but it really throws off production work that is scheduled into les-



One of the WDPS-FM ProTools digital production studios.

son plans.

Problems and Concerns. One constant problem has been the monitoring of the station while teaching. The best way has been to organize the class around the broadcasting schedule and to hire co-op students to supervise the on-air sound. This generally works pretty well, but it still makes for a very hectic day trying to hold everything together. Other adults on staff also help with the

monitoring but they have other responsibilities and cannot monitor the station constantly. I push for a "professional" image, but have to keep reminding myself that we are also here to train students. It's frustrating that as soon as they are trained, they graduate and move on to a commercial station, college, or the service!

The primary non-music programming concern has been with religious issues. As a public school system representative we avoid promoting a specific religious doctrine, but have aired non-denominational programming. Even this can be problematic as in the instance of a complaint several years ago against a show that promoted spirituality — all faiths. The caller was very upset that Buddha was mentioned at all (even though Jesus was also referred to). I try my best to diplomatically talk through these types of problems and am usually successful.

We've even had complaints about student-produced PSAs. A recent spot dealt with a country music festival. It was one of my best student-produced pieces (it could easily have been a spot on the local country-formatted station), but the caller said she knew the student producing it was black and felt it was making fun of Appalachians. I had played the spot for a couple of Appalachians and they thought it was great. I also knew the student well enough to know that there was no ridicule intended and would not have aired it if I thought there was. This was clearly a case of the listener having her own point of view. I could not make any impression on her that the student was only showing a respect for the culture. Sometimes you can't win even when you're trying to do good!

The Future. As the growth of charter schools affects the district, the school system will begin looking for more ways to use the station to get its message out to the public. Better promotion of the station's programming and more integration with the district's public information office will help achieve the twin goals of serving the needs of the community and giving the school district a good method for communicating with its constituency. It's an exciting time for WDPS-FM!

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